

OLD ENGLISH CHAIRS.



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TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—The above represent two of four genuine Old English chairs belonging to Thomas Charles, Esq., of Chillington-house, Maidstone, Kent, who has an exceedingly curious collection relating to English antiquities.

The sketches are copied from drawings made by Mr. Pretty of Northampton.

Little need be said respecting these chairs, except, that they are rather superior specimens, and that a great number of them are to be obtained in the cottages and farmhouses in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire, and I have no doubt in other parts of the county.

I am Sir, &c.,

C. J. RICHARDSON.

22, Brompton-crescent.

SOCIETY FOR IMPROVING THE DWELLINGS OF THE LABOURING CLASSES.

THIS society has lately put forth a statement, accompanied by an engraved plan of the fifteen houses now in course of erection in the Lower-road, Pentonville. The following extract fully explains the humane objects they have in view, and the means by which they propose to carry them out:—

"The committee, feeling that no description or reasoning, however accurate, is likely to make such an impression on the public as an actual experiment, have resolved to build a certain number of houses, as models of the different kinds of dwellings which they would recommend for the labouring classes in populous towns.

"In the arrangement of these buildings, the object has been to combine every point essential to the health, comfort, and moral habits of the industrious classes and their families, reference being had to the recommendations of the Health of Towns Commission, particularly with respect to ventilation, drainage, and an ample supply of water.

"The buildings are of three different classes, and designed to accommodate in the whole twenty families and thirty single persons.

"1. Eight of the families are to occupy

each an entire house, with a living-room on the ground-floor, having an enclosed recess or closet large enough to receive beds for the youths of the family, and two bed-rooms on the upper floor.

"2. The remaining twelve families are to be distributed in six houses, each family occupying a floor of two rooms, with all requisite conveniences; and as the apartments on the upper floor are to be approached through an outer door distinct from that belonging to the lower floor, their respective occupants will thus be kept entirely separate, and each floor be virtually a distinct dwelling.

"3. The centre building on the east side is intended for the accommodation of thirty widows or females of advanced age, each to have a room, with the use of a wash-house common to them all. It is proposed that the general supervision of this establishment shall be entrusted to a responsible resident.

"The contracts entered into for the buildings warrant the committee in the confident expectation that, whilst securing a remunerating rate of interest on the outlay, they will be enabled to afford to the occupants accommodations of a very superior description to those at present attainable by the labouring classes, and that at a rent considerably lower than is now commonly paid. The committee hope and believe also that the detailed statement, which it is their intention at the proper season to lay before the public, will encourage many benevolent individuals to promote the erection in their own neighbourhood of similar dwellings, and thereby conduce to the moral as well as the physical welfare of a large class of their poorer brethren, who at present have not the opportunity of bringing up their families with a due regard even to the decencies of life, and are thus placed in circumstances tending greatly to counteract the influence of all religious instruction.

"The committee deeply regret that the limited amount of funds hitherto placed at their disposal obliges them to pause, and to question how far they may be justified in undertaking the erection of the whole of the buildings contemplated by the society; but they are strongly encouraged to hope that the marked expression of public feeling in reference to the improvement of the dwellings of the labouring classes, will lead to such a prompt

and liberal increase of contributions as will enable them to complete their projected plan by the approaching spring, and also to direct their attention to the equally-important object of model dwellings adapted to the agricultural districts.

"They think it right to add that the income derived from the proposed buildings will be devoted to the promotion of the general objects of the society, and accounted for in their annual report."

METROPOLITAN IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY.

THE meetings of the Metropolitan Improvement Society have been resumed, and will in future be held on the first Thursday in every month, at the offices of the society, 20, Bedford-street, Covent-garden. At the meeting on the 5th, the attention of the members was chiefly directed to the contemplated new street, which is to lead from the Houses of Parliament to the neighbourhood of Belgrave-square. This street will be one of noble dimensions,—somewhat wider than Regent-street, and, as originally proposed, the western front of the Abbey and the Tower of the New Houses of Parliament, would have been visible throughout the whole line. This object has been lost sight of in the plan now adopted. The new street will make a crooked bend at its eastern extremity to avoid pulling down St. Margaret's Workhouse, and the bend will be such as entirely to exclude the view of the Abbey and Mr. Barry's tower. This mutilation of the original plan in its most important architectural features has been occasioned by an anxiety to avoid an increased expenditure of about 15,000*l.*, a sum quite insignificant as compared with the magnitude and importance of the contemplated improvement. A remonstrance has been addressed by the Society to the Commissioners on the subject. A resolution was also passed at the meeting to oppose a Bill about to be submitted to Parliament for inclosing a portion of the public roadway in Lincoln's-inn-fields, adjoining the new law courts. The project is to convert this roadway into a narrow foot-path instead of completing the carriage communication between the Strand and Holborn, by widening the approaches to the south and north!